

R14 Assessment of Regional Recreation and Barriers to Recreation

Presentation to Recreation and
Socioeconomic Workgroup 2/24/04



FERC Project No. 2100
Oroville Facilities Relicensing

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

- **evaluate regional recreational opportunities** in Northern California
- **to determine potential barriers**, if any, to increasing existing and future recreational uses within the Project area

METHODOLOGY

- Review of Existing Supply and Demand Reports
- Collection of Study Area Recreation Supply and Demand Information
- Analysis of Supply and Demand
- Collection of Barrier-Related Information
 - Household Survey
 - Similar Sites Survey
 - On-site Survey
 - Mailback Survey

LOCAL SUPPLY: Recreation sites in the Project area.

Campgrounds and Campsites

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidwell Canyon Campground • Bloomer Cove BIC • Bloomer Knoll BIC • Bloomer Point BIC • Bloomer Group BIC • Craig Saddle BIC • Foreman Creek BIC • Goat Ranch BIC • Floating Campsites • Floating Restrooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lime Saddle Campground • Lime Saddle Group Campground • Loafer Creek Campground • Loafer Creek Group Campground • Loafer Creek Equestrian Campground • Oroville Wildlife Area (OWA) Primitive Camping Areas • North Thermalito Forebay Recreational Vehicle (RV) "en route" Campground |
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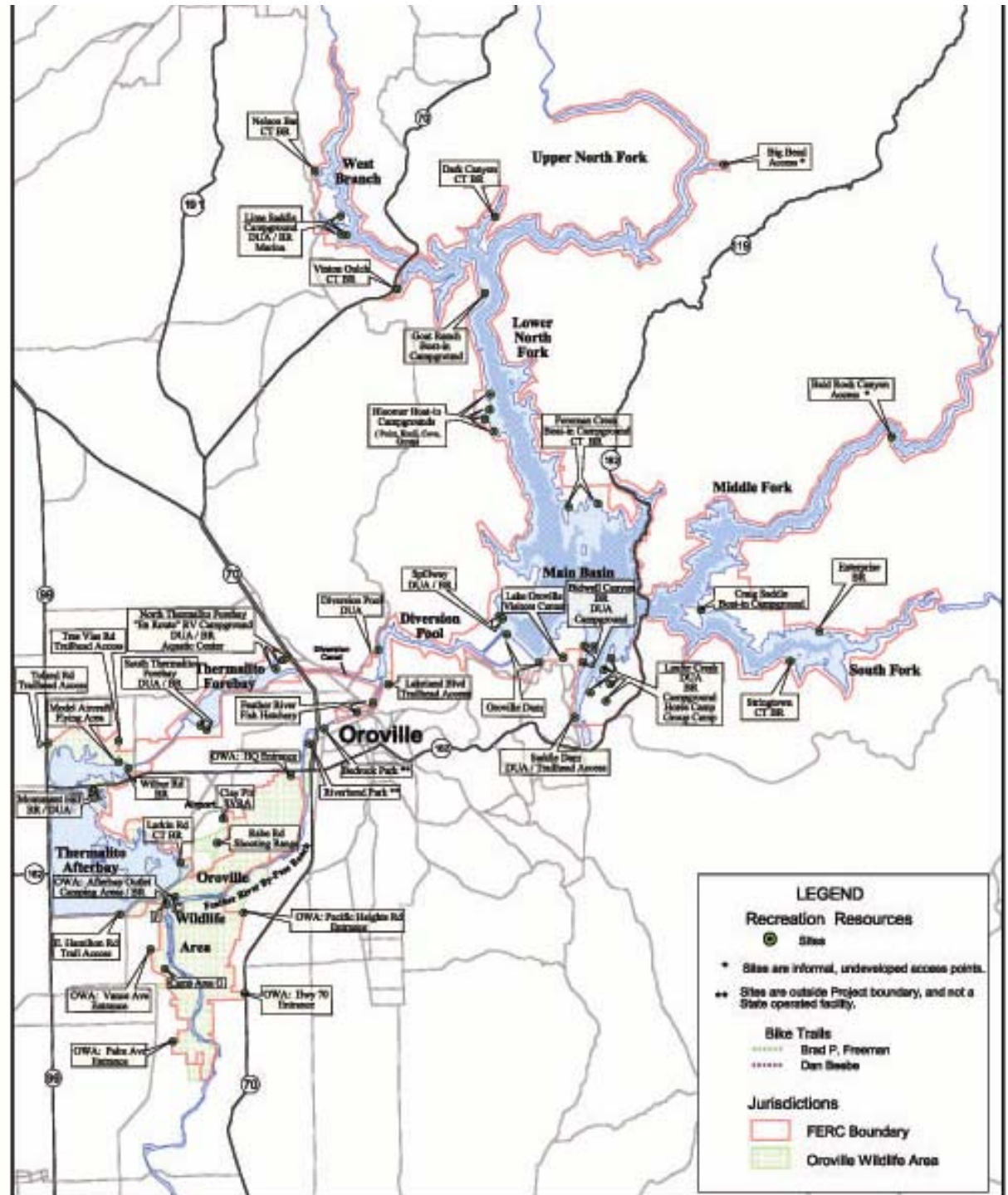
Day Use Areas (DUAs) and Other Facilities

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic Center • Bedrock Park • Bidwell Canyon Marina • Brad P. Freeman Trail • Clay Pit State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) • Dispersed use areas along the upstream and downstream reaches of the Feather River • Diversion Pool DUA • Feather River Fish Hatchery • Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (LOSRA) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Oroville Visitors Center • Lakeland Blvd. Trailhead Access (TA) • Lime Saddle Marina • LOSRA Hiking/Equestrian Trails • Model Aircraft Flying Area • Oroville Dam/Overlook DUA • OWA • Riverbend Park • Saddle Dam TA |
|---|--|

Boat Ramps (BRs) and Day Use Areas (BR/DUAs)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidwell Canyon BR/DUA • Dark Canyon Car-top BR • Enterprise BR • Larkin Road Car-top BR • Foreman Creek Car-top BR • Lime Saddle BR/DUA • Loafer Creek BR/DUA • Monument Hill BR/DUA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nelson Bar Car-top BR • North Thermalito Forebay BR/DUA • South Thermalito Forebay BR/DUA • Spillway BR/DUA • Stringtown Car-top BR • Vinton Gulch Car-top BR • Wilbur Road BR |
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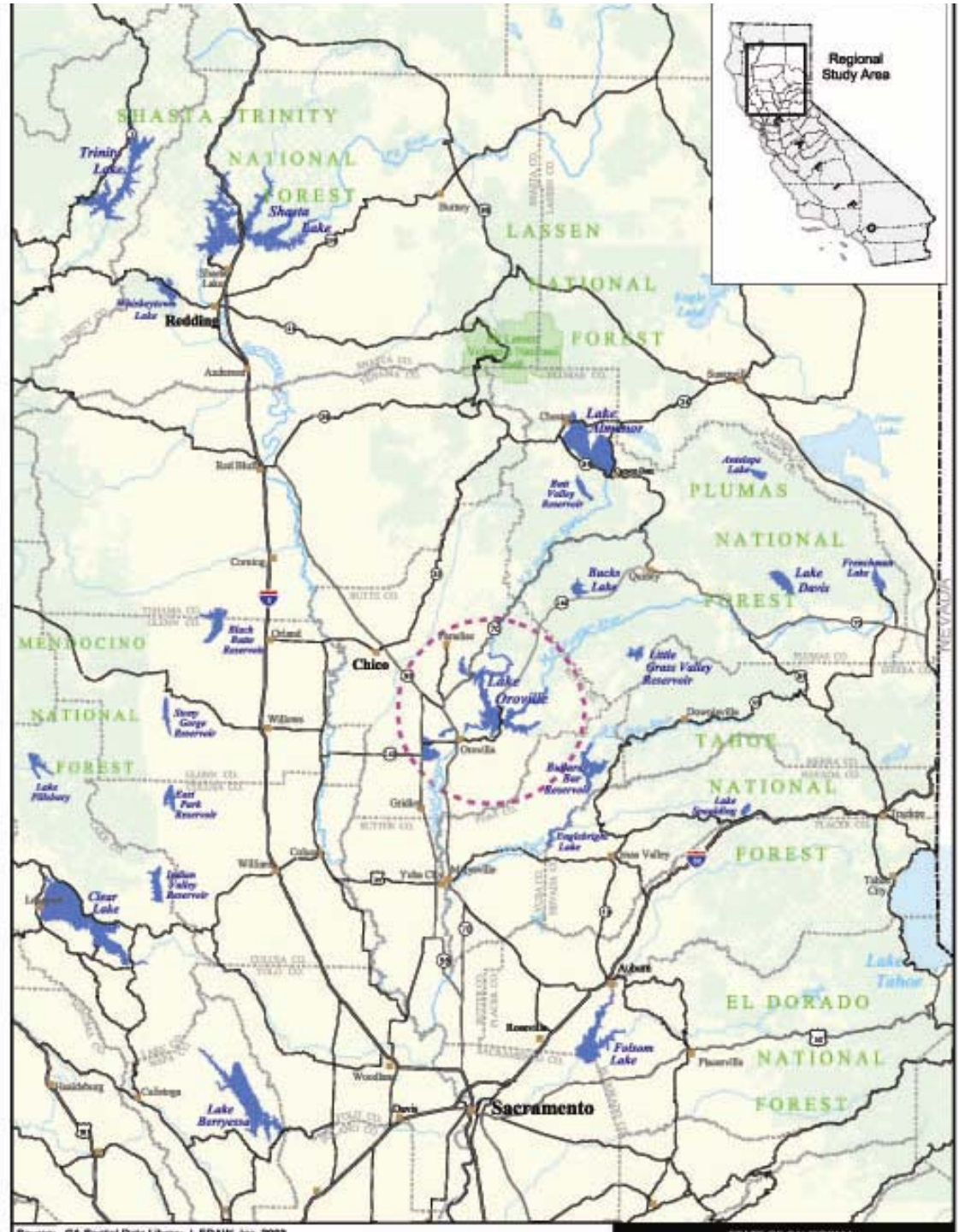
REGIONAL SUPPLY

Regional lakes and reservoirs in the study area.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Black Butte Lake•Bucks Lake Recreation Area•Bullard's Bar Reservoir•Butt Valley Reservoir•Clear Lake•East Park Reservoir•Englebright Lake•Folsom Reservoir•Indian Valley Reservoir•Lake Almanor•Lake Berryessa | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Lake Pillsbury•Lake Tahoe•Shasta Lake•Lake Spaulding•Little Grass Valley Reservoir•Stony Gorge Reservoir•Trinity Lake•Upper Feather River Reservoirs (Antelope, Frenchman, Davis)•Whiskeytown Lake |
|---|---|

Regional Study Area

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PROJECT AREA DEMAND

- Irregular but slightly downward trend in attendance at Lake Oroville (follows statewide reservoir trend) since the 70s
- Population of California and Butte County has increased in the last three decades

PROJECT AREA DEMAND

- Setting and Social Preferences
 - Visitors tend to want some element of solitude in their recreational experience at Lake Oroville.
 - Visitors tend to want risk and challenge as part of their recreational experience.
 - Lake Oroville visitors generally want the opportunity to use outdoor wilderness skills as part of their recreational experience.
 - Visitors generally prefer a setting that is quieter and not highly developed.
 - Visitors generally prefer a more natural setting to a developed landscape setting.

PROJECT AREA DEMAND

Top 15 Lake Oroville area visitor cities of residence.

Region	County	City	Percentage of Visitors
Lake Oroville Area	Butte	Oroville	27.7
		Chico	9.4
		Paradise	6.3
		Gridley	2.6
		Magalia	2.4
		Biggs	1.1
		Berry Creek	1.0
		Palermo	1.0
	Sutter	Yuba City	4.4
		Live Oak	1.0
	Yuba	Marysville	1.6
Sacramento Area	Sacramento	Sacramento	2.3
	Placer	Roseville	1.1
San Francisco Bay Area	Santa Clara	San Jose	1.7
	Solano	Vacaville	1.2
Total			64.8

Note: There were 2,071 respondents.

Source: EDAW, Inc. 2003a (Recreation Visitor On-site Survey).

PROJECT AREA DEMAND

- In general, crowding was perceived to be low at most sites within the Project area.
- The top five activities:
 - Bank fishing
 - Motor boating
 - Swimming
 - Boat fishing
 - Water-skiing/wakeboarding

REGIONAL DEMAND

Regional Recreation Sites Expected to Receive Increased Visitation in the Future

- Antelope Lake
- Lake Berryessa
- Black Butte Reservoir
- Lake Pillsbury
- Bucks Lake
- Lake Tahoe
- Butt Valley Reservoir
- Shasta Lake
- Clear Lake
- Little Grass Valley Reservoir
- East Park Reservoir
- Stony Gorge Reservoir
- Englebright Lake
- Trinity Lake
- Lake Almanor

REGIONAL DEMAND

Regional Recreation Sites Not Expected to Receive Significant Increases in Visitation

- Bullard's Bar Reservoir
- Folsom Lake
- Frenchman Lake
- Indian Valley Reservoir
- Lake Davis
- Lake Spaulding
- Whiskeytown Lake

Regional Demand

Visitation at Regional Lakes/Rivers

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Lake Tahoe 64% | 6. Feather River 27% |
| 2. Sacramento River 49% | 7. Folsom Res. 27% |
| 3. Other Lakes 33% | 8. Delta rivers/lakes 24% |
| 4. American River 32% | 9. Shasta Lake 23% |
| 5. Lake Oroville 32% | 10. Lake Almanor 22% |

(from the Household Survey)

Demand for setting types nearly equal between natural areas (46 percent) and developed areas (43 percent) (Household Survey respondents)

Comparison of Lake Oroville with Similar Sites

- Recreationists at three similar sites—**Lake Berryessa, Shasta Lake**, and **Black Butte Lake**—were surveyed for their preferences, experiences, and potential barriers to visiting Lake Oroville.
- Among Black Butte Lake, Lake Berryessa and Lake Oroville, **ease of access** was cited most frequently as why visitors chose to visit that reservoir (43 to 49 percent).
- **Quality of experience** (19 percent) and **ease of access** (18 percent) were the top two reasons visitors gave for choosing Shasta Lake.
- **Visitors rated various conditions** at each of the similar sites and at Lake Oroville. **No significant problems were identified.**

Comparison of Lake Oroville with Similar Sites

- Visitors cited **water level-related issues** at Shasta Lake and Lake Oroville as “**slight problems.**”
- 49 percent of Black Butte visitors, 80 percent of Lake Berryessa visitors, and 68 percent of Shasta Lake visitors **had never been to Lake Oroville.**

LAKE OROVILLE VISITATION, SATISFACTION, AND RECREATION ATTENDANCE FACTORS

Proximity and Access

- Since one of the main reasons for visiting lakes and reservoirs is **proximity to home**, the ability of Lake Oroville to attract many new visitors is affected (Similar Site Survey).

Information

- Lack of information was one of the top two reasons respondents have not visited the Lake Oroville area (Household and Similar Sites Surveys).

LAKE OROVILLE VISITATION, SATISFACTION, AND RECREATION ATTENDANCE FACTORS continued

Conditions.

Lake level, weather, and scenery are conditions that affect visitor satisfaction:

- Lake Oroville was rated nearly equivalent to the other lakes in the Similar Site Survey in scenic appeal;
- Of the 3 percent of Household Survey respondents who were dissatisfied with their last visit to Lake Oroville, 44 percent gave “low lake level” as the cause; and
- Of the 11 percent of boaters who were dissatisfied with their last boating experience, 46 percent gave “lake level” as the reason.

LAKE OROVILLE VISITATION, SATISFACTION, AND RECREATION ATTENDANCE FACTORS

continued

Facilities

- The **majority of visitors are satisfied** with the existing facilities at Lake Oroville.
- Some preferences exist for new facilities such as more swimming areas and new attractions such as a floating restaurant or water park.
- The majority of Household respondents stated that no facilities would motivate them to visit Lake Oroville for the first time, or more frequently if they had visited before.
- Visitors would like better or more access to the water's edge for swimming, boating, and fishing.

LAKE OROVILLE VISITATION, SATISFACTION, AND RECREATION ATTENDANCE FACTORS

continued

Special Events

- While some current visitation can be attributed to existing special events, **new special events may attract new visitors.**
- About 69 percent of water-based recreationists in the region who had never been to Lake Oroville stated special events would not motivate them to visit Lake Oroville for the first time (Household Survey).

CONCLUSIONS

Project Area Demand/Supply

- Numerous recreation activities/facilities are available in the Project area, many are similar to those available at other regional lakes and reservoirs.
- Lake Oroville offers several uncommon recreation opportunities such as boat-in camping, equestrian camping, and a designated OHV area.
- Within the Project area, there appears to be some unmet demand for swimming and beach areas.

CONCLUSIONS continued

Regional Demand/Supply

- Visitation expected to increase at most regional lakes and reservoirs, thus, demand for recreational facilities, activities, and opportunities should increase.

Lake Oroville and Similar Sites

- Proximity, resource conditions, and good facilities/maintenance were the top three reasons given for visiting each lake.

CONCLUSIONS continued

Satisfaction

- Generally, survey respondents satisfied with last visit to Lake Oroville area.
- Dissatisfied respondents cited poor or not enough facilities, access issues, and lake level as the cause of their dissatisfaction.

Potential Barriers

- Most significant factors limiting Lake Oroville visitation include proximity (especially distance from home to the lake), lack of information, and low lake level.

CONCLUSIONS continued

Special Events as a Motivating Factor:

- It is difficult to predict the portion of potential visitors to the Lake Oroville area who may attend special events
- Attendance at an event would depend on promotion of the event, the type of event, weather, and many other factors.
- Thus, the percentage could be less than the level of interest shown in survey responses.
- Survey respondents represent an enormous group of people, namely Northern California water-based recreationists within the general population that have never been to Lake Oroville.
- However, it appears that several types of special events have good potential for bringing more and new visitors to the area.

CONCLUSIONS continued

Facilities as a Motivating Factor:

- It is difficult to predict the portion of potential visitors to the Lake Oroville area who may attend due to new facilities.
- Attendance would depend on the type of facility, weather, and many other factors.
- Thus, the percentage could be less than the level of interest shown in survey responses.
- Survey respondents represent an enormous group of people, namely Northern California water-based recreationists within the general population that have never been to Lake Oroville.
- However, it appears that several new facilities have good potential for bringing more and new visitors to the area.
- Most of the respondent suggested facilities are already offered in the study area.

CONCLUSIONS continued

Recommendations

- Disseminate more information outside of Butte County about Lake Oroville area, which highlight unique opportunities at Lake Oroville.
- Further recommendations regarding the need for new facilities will be addressed in R17 – Recreation Needs Analysis

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